



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FISCAL YEAR 2010

**STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT
PROGRAM**

GUIDANCE AND APPLICATION KIT

AUGUST 2010

Title of Opportunity: Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program

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Dates: The application period for this FY 2010 SAFER solicitation begins on Tuesday August 17, 2010, and ends on September 17, 2010.

Additional Overview Information – Key Changes:

As a result of the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Supplemental Appropriation Act, 2009 (P.L. 111-32), the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants for the Hiring of Firefighters Activity will be awarded under conditions significantly different from those in effect prior to the passage of these Acts. The content of this Program Guidance and its official issuance reflects the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary's and FEMA's implementation of the provisions provided by these Acts. NOTE: These changes **ONLY** affect the FY 2010 SAFER grants. The new conditions are **NOT** retroactive to prior year grants nor will they remain in effect beyond FY 2010.

Under authorities provided under ARRA and P.L. 111-32, the following requirements are being waived for the FY 2010 SAFER Grant Program:

- **Salary limits:** There are no annual salary limits.
- **Cost-share:** There is no prescribed cost-share.
- **Retention commitment:** Grantees that are rehiring laid-off firefighters do not have to commit to retaining the SAFER-funded firefighters.
- **Period of performance:** For Hiring of Firefighters Activity grants, the period of performance has been reduced to 2 years with a commitment to retain the newly hired firefighters for 1 year after the completion of the period of performance.
- **Attrition of firefighters during the period of performance:** FY 2010 grantees who are unable to back-fill firefighting positions that were vacated due to documentable economic hardship may petition FEMA for a waiver of staffing maintenance requirements. In order to qualify for this waiver, the economic hardship must affect the entire public safety sector in your jurisdiction, and not only the fire department.

Under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity, we will distinguish between grants to hire new firefighters and grants to rehire laid-off firefighters, giving applications for the rehiring of firefighters who have been laid off the highest priority over any other hiring request.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	3
A. Introduction	3
B. Federal Investment Strategy	3
C. DHS Implementation of Waiver Authority	4
D. Criteria Development Process	5
E. Funding Priorities.....	5
PART II. AWARD INFORMATION	13
PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	15
A. Eligible Applicants	15
B. Ineligible Applicants	16
C. Cost Sharing	16
D. Restrictions.....	17
E. Other Allowable Costs	20
F. Other Funding Restrictions.....	20
G. Reasonableness of Requests	20
PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	21
A. Address to Request Application Package	21
B. Content and Form of Application	21
C. Submission Dates and Times	21
D. Program Narrative	23
E. Funding Restrictions	24
PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	25
A. Review Criteria	25
B. Review and Selection Process	25
C. Technical Evaluation Process.....	27
D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates	27
PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	28
A. Notice of Award	28
B. Award and Selection Process	28
C. Grantee Responsibilities	29
D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	33
E. Reporting Requirements	40
PART VII. FEMA CONTACTS.....	42
PART VIII. OTHER INFORMATION	43
APPENDIX 1. SAFER GRANTS DEFINITIONS	44

PART I.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Introduction

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants. SAFER grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters or to rehire firefighters that have been laid off. The goal is to assist local fire departments with staffing and deployment capabilities so they may respond to emergencies whenever they occur, assuring their communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. SAFER offers grants to support activities in two categories: (1) Hiring of Firefighters and (2) Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters.

The authority for SAFER is derived from the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended (15 U.S.C. §2229a et seq.). The authority for waiving certain provisions of the SAFER Grant Program is derived from Section 605 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 111-32). Cost sharing requirements were waived under Sec. 603 of Title VI of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (P.L. 111-5).

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, Congress appropriated a total of \$420 million to DHS for SAFER grants. The FY 2010 appropriated funds are available for award until September 30, 2011.

B. Federal Investment Strategy

The SAFER grants are an important part of the Administration's larger, coordinated effort to strengthen homeland security preparedness. The National Preparedness Guidelines are an all-hazards guide for meeting the Nation's four core preparedness objectives: prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks and catastrophic natural disasters.

The National Preparedness Guidelines define a vision for what should be achieved in order to strengthen the security of the Nation and provide guidance designed to forge a unified national consensus about what to do and how to work together at all levels of government. First responder participation is integral to the Guidelines' success. DHS expects its first responder partners to be familiar with this national preparedness architecture and to incorporate practical elements of this architecture into their planning, operations, and investments.

C. DHS Implementation of Waiver Authority

The Secretary of DHS has been granted the authority to issue waivers for many of the requirements that are reflected in the SAFER governing statute for FY 2010. The purpose of the waivers is to facilitate the hiring of firefighters to increase incident scene safety. Pursuant to the authority granted to the Secretary under section 605 of the Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-32), to waive certain statutory requirements, the Secretary has authorized the following:

- **Subsection (a)(1)(B)(i):** DHS will reduce the requirement on the period of performance from four years to 2 years.
- **Subsection (a)(1)(B)(ii):** DHS will waive the requirement to commit to retaining firefighters *rehired* under this program.
- **Subsection (c)(2):** DHS will eliminate the maintenance of expenditure requirement.
- **Subsection (c)(4)(A):** DHS will eliminate the salary limitation.

In addition, consistent with Sec. 603 of Title VI of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (P.L. 111-5), there is no cost-sharing requirements for funds under the FY 2010 appropriations.

In light of the waiver provisions set forth in section 605 of the Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-32), DHS has also revisited its existing policy on supplanting for the FY 2010 SAFER funding cycle. **Specifically**, DHS will consider petitions for waivers on supplanting. The primary intent for this supplanting waiver is to assist departments who have issued a formal layoff notice, which includes a specific date for the layoff action, prior to the start of the application period, and who face imminent layoff -- within 90 days of the close of the application period.

Under limited circumstances DHS may consider accepting waivers for departments facing documentable economic hardship that affects the entire public safety sector in their jurisdiction, and not only the fire department. This may include situations where grantees lost firefighters through normal attrition during the period of performance and found that they were unable to back-fill vacated firefighting positions due to documentable economic hardship. The causes of the vacancies could include retirement, voluntary or involuntary separation, or calls to active duty in the reserves or National Guard.

In the absence of a granted waiver, the policies stated in the present guidance regarding maintaining the staffing levels of newly-hired firefighters would still apply, i.e., vacancies caused by one of the circumstances cited above do not have to be replaced and will not cause a cancellation of the grant if not replaced. However, the amount of the allowable reimbursement of SAFER positions would be reduced by the number of vacated positions not replaced.

(For example: A grantee has 20 firefighters (FFs) and receives a SAFER grant for five more FFs. One of the 20 FFs retires and is not replaced. The grantee would then be eligible to receive reimbursement only for four FFs instead of the original five.)

Waivers will not be granted for layoffs. SAFER grantees who lay off any firefighters during the SAFER grant's period of performance will be considered in default of their award and the grant will be terminated.

D. Criteria Development Process

Each year, FEMA convenes a panel of fire service professionals to develop the funding priorities for AFG grant opportunities in the coming year. The nine major fire service organizations represented on the panel include the following:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Congressional Fire Service Institute

The panel is charged with making recommendations to FEMA regarding the creation and/or modification of previously established funding priorities as well as developing criteria for awarding grants. The content of this Program Guidance for the SAFER grants reflects implementation of the criteria development panel's recommendations with respect to the priorities, direction, and criteria for awards. Based on the recommendations provided by the criteria development panel, funding priority will be given to applications that effectively address the evaluation elements as outlined in Part V of this document.

E. Funding Priorities

SAFER intends to improve or restore local fire departments' staffing and deployment capabilities so that they may more effectively respond to emergencies. It is hoped that with the enhanced or restored staffing, a SAFER grantee's response time will be reduced sufficiently and an appropriate number of trained personnel will be assembled at the incident scene. Additionally, the enhanced or restored staffing levels of all SAFER grantees should improve the safety of firefighters by ensuring that all first-arriving apparatus are staffed with a minimum of four qualified personnel (to meet OSHA standards) who are capable of initiating the suppression response. Ultimately, SAFER grantees should achieve more efficient responses and a safer incident scene,

thereby ensuring communities have improved protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

SAFER grants are comprised of two primary categories: (1) Hiring of Firefighters (hiring new or rehiring laid-off firefighters) and (2) Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters.

1. Hiring of Firefighters Category

The highest priority under the Hiring of Firefighters activity will be afforded to applications that are seeking to rehire firefighters who have been laid off. Therefore, in the hierarchy of priorities, the first priority will be the rehiring of laid-off firefighters; the second priority will be the retention of firefighters who may face layoffs in the future; the third priority will be the filling of positions that were vacated through attrition but not filled due to economic circumstances; and finally, the fourth priority will be the hiring of new firefighters. The exceptions to these priorities are the 15 percent set-aside for new hires mentioned below in *Hiring of New Firefighters Activity*, and the statutory requirement to award no less than 10 percent of funds to volunteer and mostly volunteer departments.

a. Rehiring of Firefighters Activity

Under the rehiring of firefighters activity there are three categories, listed in order of funding priority: rehiring of laid-off firefighters, retention of firefighters facing possible layoffs, and filling of attrited positions. These grants are awarded directly to combination and career fire departments to enable them to restore their levels of staffing to attain a more effective level of response and a safer incident scene. For a position to be eligible for funding under the rehiring initiative, the position must have been the object of a layoff action that was effected between January 1, 2008 and the application deadline. Grants for rehiring firefighters provide fire departments with funding to pay 100 percent of the salaries and benefits (exclusive of overtime) and have a two-year period of performance. There is no requirement for rehiring grantees to retain the SAFER-funded firefighters after the two-year period of performance.

As stated above, only positions that were verifiably laid off between January 1, 2008 and the application deadline are eligible under rehiring of laid-off firefighters. Firefighters who have been issued a formal layoff notice, which includes a specific date for the layoff action, prior to the start of the application period, and who face imminent layoff -- within 90 days of the close of the application period -- will be eligible for SAFER funding under the retention category. Any layoff action that is not executed in accordance with the terms of the official notice of layoff may not qualify for funding in an application to rehire laid-off firefighters

or retention categories. The applicants that do not meet these Rehiring Activity parameters can apply under the rehiring attrited category or Hiring New Firefighters Activity.

Grantees must maintain their staffing at the level that existed at the time of award as well as the SAFER-funded staffing for the two-year period of performance unless the grantee has been afforded a waiver of this requirement. Laying off firefighters during the two-year period of performance will result in the termination of the grant award.

b. Hiring of New Firefighters Activity

FEMA has set aside no less than 15 percent of the FY 2010 appropriation for the hiring of new firefighters. These grants are awarded directly to volunteer, combination, and career fire departments to help the departments increase their cadre of frontline firefighters. Grants for the hiring of new firefighters have a two-year period of performance that provides fire departments with funding to pay 100 percent of the salaries and benefits of newly hired firefighters (exclusive of overtime). Departments awarded grants for hiring new firefighters are required to commit to retaining the newly hired SAFER-funded firefighters for one full year after the two-year period of performance. Only firefighters hired after the award date will be considered “new hires” and may be funded by a SAFER Grant.

For both the new hire and rehire activities, if a SAFER grantee loses any firefighters for any reason (such as attrition or termination) during the two-year period of performance, they must fill the position(s) or lose funding for the position(s) until the vacancy or vacancies are filled. The only exception is for grantees that receive waivers from FEMA for the vacated positions that have been lost due to documentable economic hardship. A grantee that fails to adjust payment requests to reflect vacancies or staffing adjustments will be considered in default, and, if the grantee does not possess a waiver of the requirement, may be required to repay all Federal funds.

c. Meeting National Standards

DHS provides a high priority to departments that are not in compliance or have fallen out of compliance with national standards (NFPA and OSHA) but can be brought into compliance in the most economical manner. Having more firefighters on staff should improve the local fire department’s abilities to comply with the staffing, response, and operational standards that enhance community and firefighter safety.

Applications resulting in the largest percentage increases in compliance with the relevant section of NFPA 1710 (for career

departments) and/or 1720 (for volunteer departments) receive greater consideration than applications resulting in smaller percentage increases in compliance.

- **NFPA 1710** Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department (**Section 5.2.4.2 – Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability**). This standard applies primarily to all-career fire departments and combination departments if the combination department chooses it.
- **NFPA 1720** Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments (**Section 4.3 – Staffing and Deployment**). This standard applies primarily to all-volunteer fire departments, but it may also apply to combination departments if the combination department does not choose to comply with the NFPA 1710 standard.

Note: SAFER grants focus only on the “Deployment” or “Staffing and Deployment” sections of these two standards, respectively. The NFPA established a special link providing information about these two standards on the NFPA Website at www.nfpa.org. For more information on the standards, contact NFPA at 1-800-344-3555, or e-mail questions to stds_admin@nfpa.org.

The specific OSHA Respiratory Protection standards to be addressed under SAFER are the following:

- **29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)** Procedures for interior structural firefighting, which provide for employer assurances, most notably the “two-in, two-out rule.”
- **29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)(i)** This standard requires that at least two employees enter the atmosphere considered to be of immediate danger to life and health (IDLH) and remain in visual or voice contact with one another at all times.
- **29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)(ii)** This standard requires that at least two employees be located outside the IDLH atmosphere.

d. Training Requirements

- i. **Firefighter-I and Firefighter-II Training.** As a condition of this grant, applicants **must provide assurance** their SAFER-funded firefighters (newly hired or rehired firefighters) will be certified at the Firefighter-I level within the first 12 months of employment **AND** be trained to the Firefighter-II level or equivalent within 24 months of employment. Applicants who fail to certify their SAFER-

funded firefighters will achieve these training requirements will not be considered for award. Grantees may be required to submit documentation of training and certification fulfillment within the stated deadlines. Grantees who fail to comply with these requirements may be required to return all or a portion of Federal funds disbursed under the grant. They also may be disqualified from participation in future AFG and SAFER award cycles. The relevant NFPA standard for this training requirement is below.

- ii. **NFPA 1001** Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications (Firefighter-I and Firefighter-II). This standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements for career and volunteer firefighters whose duties are primarily structural firefighting in nature. This standard specifies the minimum job performance requirements for firefighters. It is not the intent of the standard to restrict any jurisdiction from exceeding these requirements.
- iii. **EMS Certification Training.** Applicants will receive higher consideration if they will train their SAFER-funded firefighters to have EMS certification to the minimum level established by the local agency having jurisdiction within 24 months of employment.

e. Call Volume and Population Served

Department call volume and population served are both factored into the initial evaluation of applications. Departments responding to a high number of incidents and protecting larger numbers of people receive higher consideration than departments responding to fewer incidents or protecting smaller jurisdictions. However, there is statutory funding set aside that allows for ten percent of the available funds committed to the Hiring of Firefighters activity to go to volunteer or mostly volunteer fire departments.

f. Firefighter Health Measures

Because the health and wellbeing of firefighters is of paramount importance, applicants who indicate their newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify that these benefits will be provided. To qualify for this higher consideration, the physicals must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1582.

g. Meeting the Four-Firefighter Standard

DHS recommends, based on guidance from the criteria development panel, that for the purpose of the SAFER grants, a safe and efficient initial attack be staffed by a minimum of four firefighters. Therefore, applicants who will achieve compliance with the minimum four--firefighter standard for the first-arriving engine (or vehicle capable of initiating suppression activities) by requesting the fewest number of additional personnel receive higher consideration than applicants requesting a higher number of additional personnel to achieve compliance.

h. Other Priorities

Fire departments that have formal automatic and/or mutual aid agreements and applicants that based their requests on a staffing needs assessment also receive higher consideration.

2. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category

The purpose of these grants is to assist fire departments with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. The primary focus is the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response. The grants are intended to create a net increase in the number of trained, certified, and competent firefighters capable of safely responding to emergencies that are likely to occur within the grantee's geographic response area.

a. Meeting Staffing Standards

The highest priority under this SAFER activity is to assist departments that are experiencing a high rate of turnover and have staffing levels that are significantly below the ideal staffing level required to comply with NFPA standards 1710 or 1720 and OSHA Respiratory Protection standards 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4). (For details, see "c. Meeting National Standards" under "1. Hiring of Firefighters Grants" earlier in this document.) Departments with the lowest retention rates and the highest attrition rates are given a high priority for funding.

b. Volunteer Membership

DHS concurs with the recommendation of the criteria development panel that departments or organizations with the highest percentage of volunteers or large numbers of volunteers benefit most from the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Therefore, applicants whose membership is comprised of mostly volunteer members, or that have a significant number of volunteer firefighters, receive higher consideration.

c. Recruitment/Retention Plan

It is critical to have a plan for recruitment and/or retention activities. Accordingly, applications requesting funding for recruitment and/or retention programs based on formal plans receive higher consideration. Applicants should summarize their departments' recruitment and retention plans in their narratives and explain how the projects/activities applied for under their applications will fulfill the plans. A designated project coordinator and a marketing plan are necessary for successful implementation of any recruitment and/or retention program. Therefore, requests from departments that already have a coordinator and a marketing plan or that are requesting funding for a coordinator's position and a marketing plan receive higher consideration. In accordance with the recommendations of the criteria development panel, applications with recruitment and/or retention plans that include accident and/or injury insurance and provide lost wages for members also receive a higher competitive ranking.

d. Program Continuity

Applicants receive higher consideration if their recruitment and retention activities are designed to continue beyond the grant's period of performance and do not rely on future Federal dollars to sustain them.

e. Call Volume and Population Served

Department call volume and population served are both factored into the initial evaluation. Departments responding to a high number of incidents and protecting larger numbers of people receive higher consideration than departments responding to fewer incidents or protecting a smaller jurisdiction.

f. Firefighter Health Measures

DHS recommends that, because the health and wellbeing of firefighters is of paramount importance, applicants who indicate their newly recruited firefighters will undergo an entry-level physical and receive immunizations receive higher consideration than applicants who do not specify that these benefits will be provided. If an application includes a request for physicals, physicals paid for

with grant funds must be consistent with those required under NFPA 1582.

g. Training Requirements

Applicants who indicate that newly recruited firefighters will meet the minimum fire and EMS certification requirements prescribed by the locality or State within 24 months of appointment to the department receive additional consideration.

h. Regional Requests

Requests for recruitment and/or retention activities having a regional impact (i.e., an impact beyond the immediate boundaries of the applicant's first-due area) will receive a higher competitive advantage than applications benefitting only one applicant. An applicant may apply for support of both a regional initiative and its Department's internal needs on one application.

Please note: Only Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighter Activities qualify for regional project requests. The Hiring of Firefighters Activity is not eligible to be requested as a regional project.

PART II.

AWARD INFORMATION

This section summarizes the award period of performance and the total amount of funding available under the FY 2010 SAFER grants. It also describes the basic method used to determine final grant awards and identifies all eligible applicants for funding.

Authorizing Statutes

The authority for SAFER is derived from the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, as amended (15 U.S.C. §2229a et seq.). The authority for waiving certain provisions of the SAFER Grant Program is derived from Section 605 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 111-32). Cost-sharing requirements were abated under Sec. 603 of Title VI of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 (P.L. 111-5) for fiscal years 2009 and 2010.

Period of Performance

The period of performance for FY 2010 SAFER awards will differ from the FY 2009 awards depending on the activity under which the grant is awarded. Details on the period of performance follow:

- **Hiring of Firefighters Category:** A recruitment period of 90 days, which begins when the application is approved for award, is provided for all grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity regardless of whether the grant is for hiring new firefighters or for rehiring firefighters. The 2-year period of performance starts after the 90-day recruitment period, regardless of whether the grantee has been able to hire the requested firefighters. However, if a grantee is requesting to rehire laid-off firefighters, the period of performance can begin at the time of award.
- **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category:** A 90-day recruitment period is provided, and funding is provided for periods of up to 4 years.

The recruitment period allows each grantee time to recruit and hire their firefighters outside of the period of performance in order to maximize the availability of the funding. Without the grace of the recruitment period, grantees would be forced to conduct the recruitment and hiring activities during the period of performance which would result in the loss of reimbursable performance time under the grant. Grantees will be allowed to seek reimbursement for grant-related costs incurred during the recruitment period, as long as these costs are in the approved budget and scope of work.

Grantees should be aware that if costs incurred during the recruitment period are charged to the grant, this may affect the amount of funds available and budgeted for the period of performance. Payment for these costs may be requested in the first quarter of the period of performance.

Available Funding

Congress appropriated a total of \$420 million to carry out the activities of the FY 2010 SAFER Program. The appropriated funds are available for award until September 30, 2011.

Specific Funding Parameters

The appropriated funds are to be administered as indicated below.

- Fifteen (15) percent is set aside for the hiring of new firefighters.
- Ten (10) percent is set aside for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- Ten (10) percent is set aside for grants awarded to volunteer or mostly volunteer departments for hiring of firefighters. For the purpose of fulfilling this statutory requirement, DHS considers a department to be “**mostly volunteer**” if more than 50 percent of its membership is made up of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health, and worker’s compensation insurance, or a stipend payment such as paid-on-call. (To satisfy this statutory requirement, it may be necessary to go out of rank order to select a sufficient number of applications in order to meet the 10 percent requirement.)
- If less than ten (10) percent of the funds available for the hiring of firefighters are awarded to volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments, the remaining funds must be transferred to the component of SAFER providing grants for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Hiring Limits

Applications for the rehiring of laid-off firefighters are limited to requesting the number of firefighters lost between January 1, 2008 and application deadline. However, there is no funding limit or any limit to the number of positions eligible for funding in an application for hiring new firefighters. There is no maximum award amount for the rehiring of firefighters applications.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Volunteer and combination fire departments are eligible to apply for:

- Hiring of Firefighters Category, or
- Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Category, or
- Both categories; if the applicant wishes to apply for both categories, two separate applications must be completed, one for each category.

Career fire departments are eligible to apply for funding only in the Hiring of Firefighters Category.

Municipalities and fire districts may submit applications on behalf of fire departments lacking the legal status to do so, such as those under the auspices of the municipality or district.

Each eligible applicant is limited to one application for hiring per application period. In other words, an applicant may not submit two applications for the same activity (e.g., Hiring of Firefighters Category) during a single application period. Should this occur, both applications would be disqualified from consideration for funding.

Each eligible applicant is limited to one application for recruitment and retention and/or one application for hiring per application period.

An individual fire department may act as a “host applicant” and apply for regional projects on their own behalf and any number of neighboring fire departments. For example, a host applicant could apply for a regional media campaign promoting volunteerism.

The third-party organizations that will benefit from the regional recruitment and retention project may also apply for funding under SAFER, as long as the third-party organizations do not apply for a project conflicting with, or duplicating, the host applicant’s project.

Statewide or Local Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations

Organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters and individual fire departments (volunteer or combination) may apply for funding for regional projects. In completing the “Department Characteristics” section of the application, the regional applicant must include data approximating the characteristics of the entire region affected by the grant.

B. Ineligible Applicants

1. Federal fire departments and fire departments under contract to the Federal Government whose sole responsibility is the suppression of fires on Federal installations or lands.
2. Local and statewide organizations representing the interests of volunteer firefighters, supporting firefighter volunteerism, or otherwise having an interest in volunteer firefighters are not eligible to apply under the ‘Hiring of Firefighters Category’.
3. For-profit fire departments and organizations (i.e., do not have specific nonprofit status or are not municipally based).
4. Fire stations that are part of, controlled by, or under the day-to-day operational direction of a larger fire department or agency, or are not independent.
5. Ambulance services, Emergency Medical Services organizations, rescue squads, auxiliaries, dive teams, and urban search and rescue teams.
6. State and local agencies, such as forest service, fire marshals, emergency management offices, hospitals, and training offices.
7. Non-Federal airport and/or port authority fire departments whose sole responsibility is suppression of fires on the airport grounds or port facilities, unless the airport/port fire department has a formally recognized arrangement with the local jurisdiction to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis outside the confines of the airport or port facilities.
8. Career fire departments are not eligible for the Recruitment and Retention Activity.

C. Cost Sharing

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 waived the prescribed cost-share for the SAFER grantees receiving awards from the FY 2010 appropriations. Therefore, there is no required cost sharing, matching, or cost participation for the Hiring of Firefighters Activity of the FY 2010 SAFER grants. Of the actual salary and benefits for the SAFER-funded firefighters, 100 percent will be fully funded for the two-

year period of performance. Under the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity, there is no cost-share requirement and no maximum Federal funding limit.

D. Restrictions

1. Hiring of Firefighters Category

- a. Eligible Expenses:** The only eligible costs under the Hiring of Firefighters activity are the salary and associated benefits (actual payroll expenses) for the new firefighters or the rehired firefighters. SAFER funding will pay for 100 percent of the salary and benefit costs for each funded position. (See Appendix 1 for SAFER Grant Definitions.) There is no limit imposed on any funded position other than the fact that the reimbursable costs must be actual costs incurred. Firefighters hired prior to the award date are not eligible under the 'New Hire Activity'.

Only full-time positions will be funded. A full-time position is defined as one position that is funded for at least 2,080 hours per year, i.e., 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. However, recognizing that many departments have shifts exceeding a 40-hour workweek, DHS also will consider funding the job-sharing of a full-time position if the grantee has sufficient justification. A job-share position is a full-time position occupied by more than one person. For example: A department may hire two part-time staff persons at 28 hours each to fulfill the scheduled work hours of one 56-hour shift position. Please note, however, since the number of scheduled shifts a department typically uses is three or four, the number of individuals who may share in a SAFER-funded position is limited to four. Part-time positions will not be funded unless they are combined to equal a full-time position.

Overtime costs are not eligible. However, costs for overtime that fire departments routinely pay as a part of the base salary or the firefighter's regularly scheduled and contracted shift hours are eligible in order to comply with the *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)*.

Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this grant opportunity. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award.

- b. Ineligible Expenses:** Pre-application costs, such as grant writer fees, administrative costs, and indirect costs associated with hiring of firefighters, are not eligible. Costs for training and equipping firefighters are not eligible. However, the salaries and benefits of firefighters hired under the SAFER grants while they are engaged in training are eligible. Costs for uniforms and physicals are not eligible. In addition, funds to support additional hired positions or funds received from Federal, State,

or local sources cannot be used to supplant normal operating budgets unless a waiver has been granted.

Volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments may hire individuals to fill officer-level positions such as chief, fire inspector, training officer, safety officer, etc. However, since the purpose of SAFER grants is to enhance incident scene safety, all applicants will certify that the primary assignment of all SAFER-funded firefighters will be that of an operational assignment (i.e., fire suppression) regardless of their collateral duties.

2. Recruitment and Retention Category

a. Eligible Expenses

Applicants who propose to initiate both a recruitment and retention plan as a part of their application receive equal consideration for the recruitment activities and the retention activities. Proposals for this category may include providing incentives for volunteer firefighter members to continue their service in a fire department. Examples of initiatives that may receive funding include, but are not limited to the following:

- Insurance packages such as accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D), disability, health, dental, life;
- Reimbursement to the member while attending required basic training, i.e., compensation for lost wages, mileage, lodging, per diem;
- Marketing costs to recruit new volunteer members;
- Salary and benefits for a recruitment and retention coordinator;
- Physicals (consistent with NFPA 1582);
- Explorer, cadet, and mentoring programs;
- Staffing needs assessment;
- Tuition assistance for higher education (including college tuition) and professional certifications (**Note:** Coursework or certifications in this category should be above and beyond what the department typically funds for required minimum-staffing firefighter certification. Books and lab fees are eligible, but computers are not);
- Length of service awards and other retirement benefits (however, payments may not be retroactive for service prior to award);
- Fuel reimbursement for responding to incidents or other operational activities; and,
- Turnout gear after the new recruit undergoes a physical and is certified to firefighter-1 level (restrictions apply; see 'E, Other Allowable Costs').
- With proper justification, applications for funding in the Recruitment and Retention Activity could include activities requiring up to 4 years to complete. Additionally, applications in this activity may include

reasonable costs for administering the grant, subject to the restriction listed below.

- For each activity requested, the applicant must establish the link between the activities for which funding is being requested and the identified recruitment and/or retention problems or issues to be addressed. FEMA will not fund activities without the applicant having made a sufficient correlation between the activity and its positive effect on the recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters.
- All funded activities under recruitment and retention must be governed by formally adopted standard operating procedures (SOPs). Minimally, these SOPs should specify who qualifies for each of the incentives, specific requirements for earning the incentives, and the disposition of the awarded incentives if an individual fails to fulfill the stipulations.
- The limited funding available for SAFER activities precludes the award of funding for operational activities, such as the purchase of firefighting equipment and vehicles. As stated above, personal protective clothing may be funded for the newly recruited firefighters, but personal protective equipment for other types of members or existing members is not eligible.

b. Ineligible Expenses

- Costs incurred prior to award; including grant writer fees
- Payments or recognition for service prior to award (i.e., no retroactive payments)
- Administrative costs are limited to five percent of the awarded amount;
- Cash payments (unless the payments are for participation in activities directly linked to operational services, e.g., responding to incidents, attending training, providing operational stand-by services)
- Payments for travel for pleasure such as theatre tickets, entertainment tickets and tips (professional ball games, etc.)
- Costs associated with award banquets, such as food, refreshments, entertainment, or rental facilities. Reimbursement for actual awards, i.e., plaques, and trophies, is eligible.
- Costs for training regularly covered under the department's normal operating budget, such as tuition or instructor fees for department-mandated, basic-level training
- Uniforms
- "Giveaways" such as pencils, pens, cups, mugs, balloons, etc.
- Fees for courses and training that are also available free of charge on the internet or at a state/local training facilities (NIMS 100, 700, 800, etc)

E. Other Allowable Costs

In order to help alleviate the financial burden of start-up costs that is prevalent with successful recruitment programs, DHS will allow Recruitment and Retention grantees to charge the SAFER grant for the costs for physicals and personal protective equipment for their newly recruited members. In the FY 2010 grant cycle, DHS will allow Recruitment and Retention applicants to request funds (in their application) for up to four sets of turnout gear to be used for training the new recruits. Additionally, after award, grantees may request additional grant funds (in an amendment to their grant) for costs incurred for providing the new recruits with physicals (any physical charged to the grant must meet standards outlined in NFPA 1582). Grantees' new members must obtain physicals prior to the grantee requesting funds for the four sets of training turnout gear detailed in their application (i.e., the new recruits must pass the physical before the training gear may be purchased). The turnout gear that is purchased must remain available for future recruits to use and cannot be issued to any department members.

As stated on page 12, training requirements must be met within 24 months after award. After completion of the training, grantees may request additional grant funds for turnout gear for their new recruits via amendment. The number of sets of turnout gear is limited to the number of new recruits that received a NFPA-compliant physical and who are certified at the Firefighter-I level (NFPA 1001). Only actual costs are allowed and will be paid on a reimbursable basis. However, the allowable costs may be limited to costs determined to be reasonable by DHS. Grantees are required to provide documentation of training as well as documentation to support the purchase of the turnout gear.

F. Other Funding Restrictions

DHS grant funds may be used only for the purpose set forth in the grant and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants/cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. Failure to adhere to the award conditions will cause the grantee to be considered in default of the grant agreement, and may require the return of all Federal funds disbursed under the grant.

Pre-award costs are not allowable for SAFER grants.

G. Reasonableness of Requests

The peer review panelists consider all expenses budgeted as part of the cost-benefit determination and may recommend appropriate adjustments. Regardless of the eligibility of any costs requested or the panelists' determination, DHS reserves the right to reduce any requests for funding, in whole or in part, that it deems excessive or otherwise contrary to the best interests of the program.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

At the start of the application period, an online tutorial will be available for applicants at www.firegrantsupport.com. The online tutorial provides guidance regarding the preparation of a competitive grant application and the SAFER application requirements. All applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the applicant tutorial prior to beginning their application. The tutorial explains the eligible activities by illustrating many of the application screens. It provides tips for navigating the application screens and summarizes the changes in the SAFER grants for FY 2010. In addition, the tutorial provides a review of the lessons learned from previous years.

B. Content and Form of Application

Application forms and instructions are available on-line. To access these materials, go www.firegrantsupport.com. (See below.)

C. Submission Dates and Times

The online FY 2010 SAFER application will be accessible beginning **Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. (EST)** from the AFG Website (www.firegrantsupport.com).

1. **Application via www.firegrantsupport.com.** The automated application has been designed with “help screens” and “drop-down menus” to assist the applicant throughout the application process. The application can be saved and retrieved for update and revision until the end of the application period. **Please note that once an application has been completed and submitted, no changes can be made.** The automated system does not allow an applicant to submit an incomplete application -- the system alerts the applicant when required information has not been entered. By submitting an application online, the applicant will automatically receive confirmation via e-mail that their application has been successfully submitted.

The online system will allow one authorized representative of an eligible organization to log on and create a user name and password. The selection of the authorized representative is at the discretion of each applicant. **If you have a user name and password from a previous AFG, SAFER, or Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) application, you should use the same user name and password. Failure to use your existing user name and password will delay the processing of your**

application. Applicants also should record their user name and password for future access to their application.

2. **Paper applications** are available; however, they are discouraged because of the inherent delays associated with their processing. Additionally, paper applications do not have the advantage of the built-in assistance of the electronic application or the assurance that the application has been accurately completed before mailing. Applicants who wish to apply using a paper application may request that one be sent to them via US Postal Service by calling the Help Desk at 1-866-274-0960. ***Paper applications will not be sent to prospective applicants via overnight delivery, fax, or email.***

Completed paper applications should be mailed to the following address:

DHS/FEMA/Grant Programs Directorate
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
800 K Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20472 -3620

Applications mailed to any other address may miss the appointed closing date and therefore will be disqualified and ineligible for funding.

All applications must be completed and submitted electronically, or postmarked on or ***before the close of business, by 5:00 p.m. (EST) on Friday, September 17, 2010.*** Only electronic applications submitted via the online, automated grant application system will receive a confirmation of receipt. Applicants should print a copy of the confirmation for their records upon receiving verification that their application has been successfully submitted. No confirmation will be issued for paper applications. Incomplete applications or applications submitted via any other electronic means, including email or fax, automatically will be deemed ineligible.

Applicants are allowed to hire, or otherwise employ the services of, a grant writer to assist in the application process. However, the applicant is responsible for ensuring that the information contained in their submitted application is a true and accurate reflection of their organization and represents the scope of effort being proposed and the time and cost required to achieve it. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to review all work produced by grant writers, or other third parties on their behalf, ***prior*** to submission of their application. Applicants who falsify their application, or misrepresent their organization or proposal in any manner will have their application deemed ineligible by the Program Office and referred to the Office of Inspector General for further action, as appropriate.

3. **Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.** The applicant must provide a DUNS number with their application. Organizations should verify that they have a DUNS number, or take the steps necessary to obtain one, as soon as possible. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at (866) 705-5711.

- 4. Central Contractor Registration (CCR).** The application process also involves an updated and current CCR by the applicant, which must be confirmed at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

D. Program Narrative

In the application, fire departments applying for SAFER grants will be asked general questions about their organization and community, as well as questions specific to the proposed project. State or local volunteer interest groups will be asked a number of general questions regarding their organizations and a series of activity-specific questions relative to the Recruitment and Retention projects they propose and the activities they select. The activity-specific questions allow DHS to understand the nature of the request and to evaluate how closely the request adheres to the established priorities.

The answers to these questions are used during the initial phase of evaluation to determine whether the organization serves an urban, suburban, or rural community. Characteristics such as population served, number of stations, call volume, number of civilian and firefighter casualties, and the number of firefighter positions are required. The designation of community type is important because we have established different funding priorities depending on the type of community served. The community designation (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural) also may affect the ranking of your application, depending on the activity for which you are applying. This is why you must justify your designation in the narrative statement section of the application if your designation is different from ours.

Lastly, you will be required to provide a written narrative statement describing the planned project. The narrative portion of the application should provide details of the activity for which you are seeking funding, including budget details. Applicants should be sure that each of the requested activities, i.e., each line item in the Request Details section of the application, is fully described in the Project Description portion of the Narrative Statement. Each element should provide the panelists with information regarding how the proposed activity is related to the applicant's hiring program or recruitment and retention program.

In applications for recruitment and retention, the applicants should also provide details regarding how their volunteers will qualify for the incentives to be offered, i.e., who is eligible for initiatives funded under the grant, and discuss any prerequisites. For example, an organization might withhold paying stipends until their members participate in a minimum number of operational activities.

The narrative should also describe your organization's financial need and elaborate on the benefits your community and/or organization will gain from the expenditure of the grant funds. Applications should particularly note how the grant would enhance your department's ability to protect critical infrastructure. Finally, the narrative should explain

the extent to which the grant would enhance your daily operations and/or how the grant will positively impact your ability to protect life and property.

Applicants should “save” often as the electronic application includes a **“time-out” feature** to help ensure activity usage of the servers. If no “save” activity is detected for a period of time, the “time-out” feature is activated, and all information entered, but not saved, could be lost. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants type the narrative off-line using either a word processing program, such as MS Word, Word Perfect, Notepad, etc., to avoid losing any information. Once the narrative is complete, the applicants can then “cut-and-paste” the text into the narrative section of the application. Please note that the narrative block does not allow for formatting. Do not type your narrative using only capital letters. Additionally, do not include tables, special fonts, or graphs.

Space for the narrative is limited; it should not exceed six pages. Once you save your narrative to the application, you should log-out of your application and then log back in to your application to assure that your attempt to save the narrative was successful.

E. Funding Restrictions

Please see Part III, Eligibility Information for a list of funding restrictions.

PART V.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Review Criteria

All complete and eligible applications are evaluated based on the substance of the application relative to the established SAFER Grant funding priorities. The answers to activity-specific questions as well as information under Department Characteristics provide the basis to determine the application's standing relative to stated priorities. This initial evaluation assesses how closely each application matches the program's established priorities (see information on the funding priorities in *Part I. Funding Opportunity Description*). Applications most consistent with the SAFER Grant funding priorities score higher in the automated evaluation than those applications not aligned with the priorities. Applications scoring the highest will be determined to be within the "competitive range" and will undergo further evaluation through a peer review process. The initial scores are combined later with the scores of the applications after they receive peer review evaluations, with each score representing 50 percent of the total application score with respect to the final award determinations.

B. Review and Selection Process

It has been the practice of DHS to submit for peer review a sufficient number of applications to assure that the SAFER grant program's goals and objectives will be met. A panel of at least three peer review panelists performs the second phase of the applications' evaluations. These panelists evaluate the application using the narrative statement, along with the answers to the general questions and the activity-specific questions, to determine the worthiness of the request for an award. Each application is judged on its own merits against established criteria and is not compared to other applications. Applications that best address the grant funding priorities will score higher than those that are inconsistent with the priorities.

Panelists will evaluate and score the following criteria:

1. Hiring of Firefighters Category Narrative Elements

The narrative statement for applications requesting funding in this category **must include** the following four elements. Each element will be evaluated independently by the peer review panelists:

- a. **Project Description:** This statement should describe why the applicant needs the grant funds, i.e., how the newly hired firefighters will be used within the department and a description of the specific benefit these firefighters will provide for the fire department and community. If the

applicant is rehiring laid-off firefighters, the narrative should explain when they were laid off and how the layoffs have affected the service to the community.

- b. Impact on Daily Operations:** This statement should explain how the community and current firefighters are at risk without the requested firefighters, and to what extent that risk will be reduced if the applicant is awarded. What impact will the newly funded positions have on NFPA and/or OSHA compliance?
- c. Financial Need:** This statement should explain the applicant's organizational budget and its inability to address the need without Federal assistance, including other actions the applicant has taken to meet their staffing needs.
- d. Performance (Additional Consideration):** Applicants should explain whether they have a proven record of accomplishment for timely project completion and satisfactory performance of other AFG, FP&S, and SAFER awards.

Note: These elements carry equal weight when factored into the peer review panelists' scores.

2. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Narrative Elements

The narrative statement for applications requesting funding for this activity **must include** the following four elements. Each element will be evaluated independently by the peer review panelists:

- a. Project Description:** This statement should describe how the applicant will use the grant funds. The project description should include the following:
 - How the recruitment of new volunteer firefighters and/or retention of current volunteer firefighters will impact the department's or organization's identified operational needs or capabilities;
 - A description of the specific benefit these firefighters will provide for the fire department(s) or community;
 - A description of the recruitment and/or retention problems or issues the department has identified;
 - How the activities being requested address those identified needs;
 - Specifics about the recruitment and/or retention plan;
 - The specific benefit the efforts would provide to the surrounding community or communities; and
 - Specifics about which activities are part of the regional request and which activities are exclusive to the host applicant, if applicable.

- b. Impact on Daily Operations:** This statement should explain how the community and current firefighters (or geographic areas of concern for an eligible organization) are at risk without the requested firefighters, and to what extent that risk will be reduced if the applicant is awarded.
- c. Financial Need:** This statement should explain the applicant's organizational budget and its inability to address the need without Federal assistance, including other actions the applicant has taken to meet their staffing needs.
- d. Performance (Additional Consideration):** Applicants should explain whether they have a proven track record for timely project completion and satisfactory performance in other AFG, FP&S, and SAFER awards.

Note: These elements carry equal weight when factored into the peer review panelists' scores.

The host organization for a regional application must include in the narrative section a list of the participating third-party organizations that will benefit from the regional project if the project is approved. The host applicant may also apply for other needs beyond the regional project as long as they specify in the narrative section of the application which requested activities are for the regional request.

C. Technical Evaluation Process

The application will be reviewed by DHS/FEMA for consistency with the goals and objectives stated in Part I of this guidance.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

FEMA will commence the panel review process within 60 days of the end of the application period. Award decisions for the FY 2010 program will be completed on or before September 30, 2011.

PART VI.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notice of Award

Upon approval of an application, the grant will be awarded to the grantee. The date that this is done is the “award date.” Notification of award approval is made through the AFG Online System. Once an award has been approved, a notice is sent to the authorized grant official. If you do not receive a notification, please contact your FEMA Program Office for your award number.

The period of performance is based on the award type. For example an award within the Hiring category will have a period of performance of 2 years, while awards under the Recruitment and Retention category can have a period of performance of up to 4 years (depending on proposed project scope). The period of performance specific to each award is listed in the award package. Any unobligated funds will be de-obligated at the end of the close-out period. Extensions to the period of performance will be considered only through formal requests to FEMA with specific and compelling justifications why an extension is required. All extension requests must be submitted to FEMA at least 60 days prior to the end of the period of performance and must address:

- Reason for delay;
- Current status of the activity/activities;
- Approved period of performance termination date and new project completion date;
- Remaining available funds, both Federal and non-Federal;
- Budget outlining how remaining Federal and non-Federal funds will be expended;
- Plan for completion including milestones and timeframes for achieving each milestone and the position/person responsible for implementing the plan for completion; and
- Certification that the activity/activities will be completed within the extended period of performance without any modification to the original Statement of Work approved by FEMA.

B. Award and Selection Process

As stated earlier, each application is initially evaluated based on the answers to the activity-specific questions. The applications that best address the established funding priorities are subject to a second-level review. This second-level review is conducted via a panel of peer reviewers who assess the application’s merits with respect to the detail provided in the narrative for the activity, the applicant’s financial need, and the

purported benefit to be derived for the cost. The peer reviewers independently score each application, discuss the merits and shortcomings of the application, and reconcile any major scoring discrepancies, if necessary. A consensus is allowed but not required.

The application scores from the automated evaluation are combined with the peer review scores to determine the final scores. The applications are then ranked according to the final scores. Applications that make it into the “fundable range” undergo a technical review by a subject matter specialist who assesses and validates the technical assertions made in the application.

FEMA reviews the applications for eligibility to assure the funds will be spent in an economical and efficient manner. With this review, FEMA will make award recommendations and/or recommendations calling for adjustments in the awarded activities after review by grants management specialists. The specialists contact the applicants to discuss and/or negotiate the content of the application before final award decisions are made.

A sufficient number of awardees will be selected from this one application period to obligate all of the funding available under the FY 2010 appropriation.

Awards will be made using the results of peer-reviewed applications as the primary basis for decisions, regardless of activity. Upon approval of an application, the grant will be awarded to the grant recipient. The date in which this action takes place is considered the “award date.” Once an award has been approved, a notice will be sent to the authorized grantee official. The authorized grantee official should carefully read all award and special condition documents, i.e., the award package articles of agreement. This notification includes instructions on how to access the award.

The length of the period of performance will differ depending on the activity for which the grant is awarded. The period of performance begins on the Project Period/Budget Period start date listed in the award package. Any unobligated funds will be de-obligated at the end of the closeout period.

C. Grantee Responsibilities

SAFER Award recipients (grantees) must agree to the following:

1. Perform all tasks (scope of work) as outlined in the grantee’s application, approved by FEMA, and comply with all special conditions in accordance with the articles of agreement and within the period of performance. Grantees that do not fulfill their obligations under these grants will be considered in default and may be required to return the Federal funds disbursed under the grant award.
2. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity must train their SAFER-funded firefighters to the Firefighter-I level (NFPA 1001) within the first 12 months of employment **AND** train the SAFER-funded firefighters to

Firefighter-II level (NFPA 1001 or equivalent) within 24 months of employment.

3. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity who layoff any firefighters during the two-year period of performance will be considered in default of their grant and the award will be terminated.
4. Grantees under the Hiring of Firefighters Activity must agree to maintain the SAFER-funded positions as well as the number of positions declared at the time of award throughout the two-year period of performance. Grantees who fail to maintain this level of staffing risk losing the Federal funds awarded under this grant, unless they receive a waiver from FEMA for the vacated positions lost due to documentable economic hardship. Be advised, firefighters hired prior to the award are not eligible for SAFER-funding under the new hire activity.
5. Grantees who are using SAFER funding to hire new firefighters must commit to retaining the SAFER-funded firefighters for one full year after the end of the two-year period of performance. Grantees that are using SAFER funding to rehire laid-off firefighters are NOT subject to this requirement.
6. Retain grant files and supporting documentation for three years after receipt of the official notification that the grant has been closed. FEMA may require access to any pertinent books, documents, papers, or records belonging to a grant recipient. The DHS Office of Inspector General or the Comptroller General of the United States may also require access to a grantee's books and records.
7. Provide periodic performance reports in conjunction with the automated payment requests to FEMA. In all years of the grant's period of performance, for both the Hiring of Firefighters and the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activities, grantees must submit performance reports with each payment request, as well as a final performance report at grant closeout. Payments are requested on-line using the automated system and payments are based on actual expenses incurred during the period covered by the payment request. Quarterly performance reporting is required when the grantee has not requested funding within the quarter.

At the end of the grant's period of performance, all grantees are required to produce a final report on how the grant funding was used and the benefits realized from the award. Grantees must submit a final financial report and a final performance report (i.e., closeout report) within 90 days after the end of the period of performance. See additional information on the reporting requirements on page 40. After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, grantees are given an official notice that the closeout has been accepted and completed. Any remaining grant funds are de-

obligated. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain unliquidated.

8. Administer the grant in accordance with the administrative rules for Federal grants and cooperative agreements, specifically 44 CFR part 13.
9. Follow the audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations, which calls for grantees who expend \$500,000 or more in Federal funds in a year (from all Federal sources) to have a single audit performed in accordance with the Circular. (For more information about the Circulars, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.)
10. Notwithstanding any provision of other laws, firefighters hired under these grants shall not be discriminated against, or be prohibited from, engaging in volunteer firefighting activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours.
11. Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 requires that, beginning October 1, 2005, all recipients of Federal preparedness funds (including recipients of Federal grants and contracts) adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a condition for the receipt of the Federal funds. Recipients of FY 2010 SAFER grants will be considered to be in compliance with the NIMS requirement if the grantee: (a) has an operational knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS); (b) has an understanding of NIMS' principles and policies; and (c) agrees to adopt and/or comply with all directives, ordinances, rules, orders, edicts, etc., passed down by the local or State authorities with respect to incident management. Responders who have already been trained in ICS do not need retraining if their previous training is consistent with DHS standards. In order for us to document compliance, grantees will be required to certify their compliance with the NIMS/ICS requirements as part of their grant closeout process. Grantees may contact their State Emergency Preparedness Officer or State Fire Marshall for local NIMS compliance requirements.
12. To the extent possible, grantees should seek, recruit, and appoint members of racial and ethnic minority groups and women to increase their ranks within the applicant's department.
13. **Procurement Integrity:** Through audits conducted by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and through the Assistance to Firefighters Program Office grant monitoring, it has become apparent that some Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) recipients have not adhered, or are not totally adhering, to the proper procurement requirements when spending grant funds. Anything less than full compliance with 2 CFR 215.40 – 215.48 "Procurement Standards" or 44 CFR 13.36 "Procurement", as applicable, jeopardizes the integrity of the grant as well as the grant program. As such, in FY 2010 we will place a greater emphasis on

oversight of grantees' procurement actions. Below, we have reiterated the FEMA procurement requirements for grantees when making procurements under this grant. A review of grantees' procurement practices is part of the normal AFG monitoring activities.

- **Competition:** Grantees may use their own procurement procedures, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable Federal laws and standards. All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Grantees are expected to promote competition and ensure advantageous pricing by soliciting bids from multiple vendors. Purchases shall be made from the vendor whose bid is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the grantee when price, quality, and other factors are considered. Grantees who fail to adhere to their own procurement policy, or otherwise fail to fully "compete" any purchase involving Federal funds, may be subject to questioning and subsequently disallowed costs.
- **Documentation:** Grantees are required to maintain and retain documentation such as bids, quotes, and cost/price analyses on file for review by Federal personnel. The required documentation for federally funded purchases should include specifications, solicitations, competitive quotes, or proposals, basis for selection decisions, purchase orders or contracts, invoices, and cancelled checks. Grantees who fail to document their purchases may find that their expenditures will be questioned and possibility disallowed.
- **Specifications:** Specifications developed for solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the bidder shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the recipient. However, those specifications may not be so narrowly constructed or contain features which unduly limit, restrict, or eliminate competition unnecessarily. Grantees may, when developing their solicitations, list factors that will be used in their evaluation of proposals that are submitted, as long as those evaluation factors are not found to limit competition. Finally, grantees cannot impose in-State or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals. Applicants and grantees are encouraged to obtain product information from vendors in order to be more informed about the items they plan to purchase. However, grantees may not use specifications obtained from vendors for any solicitation with Federal grant funds if the specifications would be found to be restrictive. It is the grantee's responsibility to assure that vendor specifications are not used in a manner which would result in restricting or limiting competition from vendors of similar products. Additionally, if a vendor or manufacturer drafts, writes, edits, critiques, or provides any direct consultation on a grant application that vendor or manufacturer cannot submit a bid for that purchase. Likewise,

if a vendor or manufacturer drafts, writes, edits, or critiques a specification to be used for the solicitation for the purchase of a specific product, that vendor or manufacturer cannot submit a bid for that purchase. See Conflicts of Interest below. Grantees shall, on request, make available to DHS pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, *etc.*, if 1) the purchase specifies a "brand name" product or 2) the proposed award is to be awarded to other than the apparent low bidder under a sealed bid process. Grantees found to be using proprietary, or otherwise limiting specifications, may find their expenditures questioned and subsequently disallowed.

- **Personal and Organizational Conflicts of interest:** In order to ensure objective vendor performance and eliminate a real or apparent unfair competitive advantage, anyone who develops or drafts specifications, requirements, statements of work (including the grant application), invitations for bids, and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements. Additionally, no employee, officer, or agent of the grantee shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a procurement supported by Federal funds if a real or an apparent conflict of interest would be involved. A conflict of interest could arise when any of the following conditions exists: (a) an officer, employee, or agent of the grantee has a financial or other interest in the vendor selected for the procurement; (b) any member of the grantee's officers', employees', or agents' immediate family has a financial or other interest in the vendor selected for the procurement; or (c) an organization which employs a grantee's officer, employee, or agent is a vendor or has a financial or other interest in the vendor selected for the procurement. For the purposes of this program, we consider volunteers of an organization and grant writers to be employees, officers, and/or agents of the grantee. As such, no volunteer or member of an organization or anyone involved in the application for funding can participate in, or benefit from, the procurement if Federal funds are involved. Grantees that purchase items with grant funds from vendors who employ any of their volunteers/members will have to document how they avoided a conflict of interest during the procurement process (i.e., specific details regarding how the members/volunteers removed themselves, or how they were prevented from participating in the process). Grantees who fail to document fully their purchases may find that their expenditures will be questioned and subsequently disallowed.

D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The recipient and any sub-recipient(s) must, in addition to the assurances made as part of the application, comply and require each of its subcontractors employed in the completion of the project to comply with all applicable statutes, regulations, executive

orders, OMB Circulars, terms and conditions of the award, and the approved application.

- 1. Standard Financial Requirements.** The grantee and any subgrantee(s) shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations. A non-exclusive list of regulations commonly applicable to DHS grants are listed below:

- 1.1 – Administrative Requirements.**

- 44 CFR Part 13, *Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments*
- 2 CFR Part 215, *Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations* (OMB Circular A-110)

- 1.2 – Cost Principles.**

- 2 CFR Part 225, *Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian tribal Governments* (OMB Circular A-87)
- 2 CFR Part 220, *Cost Principles for Educational Institutions* (OMB Circular A-21)
- 2 CFR Part 230, *Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations* (OMB Circular A-122)
- 48 CFR 31.2, *Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR), Contracts with Commercial Organizations*

- 1.3 – Audit Requirements.**

- OMB Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*

1.4 – Duplication of Benefits. There may not be a duplication of any Federal assistance by governmental entities, per 2 CFR Part 225, Basic Guidelines Section C.3 (c), which states: Any cost allocable to a particular Federal award or cost objective under the principles provided for in this Authority may not be charged to other Federal awards to overcome fund deficiencies, to avoid restrictions imposed by law or terms of the Federal awards, or for other reasons. However, this prohibition would not preclude governmental units from shifting costs that are allowable under two or more awards in accordance with existing program agreements. Non-governmental entities are also subject to this prohibition per 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230 and 48 CFR 31.2.

- 2. Payment.** DHS/FEMA uses the Direct Deposit/Electronic Funds Transfer (DD/EFT) method of payment to Recipients. To enroll in the DD/EFT, the Recipient must complete a Standard Form 1199A, Direct Deposit Form, found at <http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/1199a.pdf>.

FEMA utilizes the Assistance to Firefighters eGrants System for the full lifecycle of the grant. Please use the following link to access the system (<https://portal.fema.gov/famsVuWeb/home>).

2.1 – Advance Payment. In accordance with Treasury regulations at 31 CFR Part 205, the Recipient shall maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and the disbursement of said funds (See 44 CFR Part 13.21(i)) regarding payment of interest earned on advances. In order to request an advance, the Recipient must maintain or demonstrate the willingness and ability to maintain procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from DHS and expenditure and disbursement by the Recipient. When these requirements are not met, the Recipient will be required to be on a reimbursement for costs incurred method.

NOTE: FUNDS WILL NOT BE AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFERRED UPON ISSUANCE OF THE GRANT. GRANTEEES MUST SUBMIT A REQUEST FOR ADVANCE/REIMBURSEMENT (SF-270) IN ORDER FOR THE FUNDS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE GRANTEE’S ACCOUNT.

- 3. Non-supplanting Requirement.** Grant funds will be used to supplement existing funds, and will not replace (supplant) funds that have been appropriated for the same purpose. Applicants or grantees may be required to supply documentation certifying that a reduction in non-Federal resources occurred for reasons other than the receipt or expected receipt of Federal funds.

4. Administrative Requirements.

4.1 – Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). FEMA recognizes that much of the information submitted in the course of applying for funding under this program or provided in the course of its grant management activities may be considered law enforcement sensitive or otherwise important to national security interests. While this information under Federal control is subject to requests made pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. §552, all determinations concerning the release of information of this nature are made on a case-by-case basis by the FEMA FOIA Office, and may likely fall within one or more of the available exemptions under the Act. The applicant is encouraged to consult its own State and local laws and regulations regarding the release of information, which should be considered when reporting sensitive matters in the grant application, needs assessment and strategic planning process. The grantee should be familiar with the regulations governing Sensitive Security Information (49 CFR Part 1520), as it may provide additional protection to certain classes of homeland security information.

4.2 – Compliance with Federal civil rights laws and regulations. The grantee is required to comply with Federal civil rights laws and regulations. Specifically, the grantee is required to provide assurances as a condition for receipt of Federal funds that its programs and activities comply with the following:

- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §2000 et seq. – Provides that no person on the grounds of race, color, or national

origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Title VI also extends protection to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). (42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.)

- *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972*, as amended, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq. – Provides that no person, *on the basis of sex*, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §794 – Provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, shall, *solely* by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subject to discrimination in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- *The Age Discrimination Act of 1975*, as amended, 20 U.S.C. §6101 et seq. – Provides that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Grantees must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards adopted under the above statutes. The grantee is also required to submit information, as required, to the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties concerning its compliance with these laws and their implementing regulations.

4.3 – Services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons. Recipients of FEMA financial assistance are required to comply with several Federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, natural origin, and sex in the delivery of services. National origin discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of limited English proficiency. To ensure compliance with Title VI, recipients are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to their programs. Meaningful access may entail providing language assistance services, including oral and written translation, where necessary. The grantee is encouraged to consider the need for language services for LEP persons served or encountered both in developing their proposals and budgets and in conducting their programs and activities. Reasonable costs associated with providing meaningful access for LEP individuals are considered allowable program costs. For additional information, see <http://www.lep.gov>.

4.4 – Certifications and Assurances. Certifications and assurances regarding the following apply:

- *Lobbying.* 31 U.S.C. §1352, *Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions.* – Prohibits the use of Federal funds in lobbying members and employees of Congress, as well as employees of Federal agencies, with respect to the award or amendment of any Federal grant, cooperative agreement, contract, or loan. FEMA and DHS have codified restrictions upon lobbying at 44 CFR Part 18 and 6 CFR Part 9. (Refer to form included in application package.)
- *Drug-free Workplace Act*, as amended, 41 U.S.C. §701 et seq. – Requires the recipient to publish a statement about its drug-free workplace program and give a copy of the statement to each employee (including consultants and temporary personnel) who will be involved in award-supported activities at any site where these activities will be carried out. Also, place(s) where work is being performed under the award (i.e., street address, city, state and zip code) must be maintained on file. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer of any employee convicted of a violation of a criminal drug statute that occurs in the workplace. For additional information, see 44 CFR Part 17.
- *Debarment and Suspension.* – Executive Orders 12549 and 12689 provide protection from fraud, waste, and abuse by debarring or suspending those persons that deal in an irresponsible manner with the Federal government. The recipient must certify that they are not debarred or suspended from receiving Federal assistance. For additional information, see 2 CFR Part 3000.
- *Federal Debt Status.* – The recipient may not be delinquent in the repayment of any Federal debt. Examples of relevant debt include delinquent payroll or other taxes, audit disallowances, and benefit overpayments. (See OMB Circular A-129) (Refer to SF-424, item number 17.)
- *Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990.* – In accordance with section 6 of the *Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990*, 15 U.S.C. §2225a, the recipient agrees to ensure that all conference, meeting, convention, or training space funded in whole or in part with Federal funds, complies with the fire prevention and control guidelines of the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974*, 15 U.S.C. §2225.

Grantees must comply with all regulations, guidelines, and standards adopted under the above statutes.

4.5 – Integrating individuals with disabilities into emergency planning.

Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all aspects of emergency

mitigation, planning, response, and recovery by entities receiving financial funding from FEMA. In addition, Executive Order 13347, *Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness* signed in July 2004, requires the Federal government to support safety and security for individuals with disabilities in situations involving disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes, and acts of terrorism. Executive Order 13347 requires the Federal government to encourage consideration of the needs of individuals with disabilities served by State, local, and tribal governments in emergency preparedness planning.

4.6 – Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Compliance. FEMA is required to consider the potential impacts to the human and natural environment of projects proposed for FEMA grant funding. FEMA, through its Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Program, engages in a review process to ensure that FEMA-funded activities comply with various Federal laws including: *National Environmental Policy Act*, *National Historic Preservation Act*, *Endangered Species Act*, the *Clean Water Act*, and Executive Orders on Floodplains (11988), Wetlands (11990), Environmental Justice (12898). The goal of these compliance requirements is to protect our nation's water, air, coastal, wildlife, agricultural, historical, and cultural resources, as well as to minimize potential adverse effects to low-income and minority populations.

The grantee shall provide all relevant information to FEMA to ensure compliance with applicable Federal EHP requirements. Any project with the potential to impact natural or biological resources or historic properties cannot be initiated until FEMA has completed the required EHP review. In addition to a detailed project description that describes what is to be done with the grant funds, how it will be done, and where it will be done, grantees shall provide detailed information about the project (where applicable), including, but not limited to, the following:

- Project location (i.e., exact street address or map coordinates)
- Total extent of ground disturbance and vegetation clearing
- Extent of modification of existing structures
- Construction equipment to be used, staging areas, etc.
- Year that any affected buildings or structures were built
- Natural, biological, and/or cultural resources present within the project area and vicinity, including wetlands, floodplains, geologic resources, threatened or endangered species, or National Register of Historic Places listed or eligible properties, etc.
- Visual documentation such as good quality, color and labeled site and facility photographs, project plans, aerial photos, maps, etc.
- Alternative ways considered to implement the project (not applicable to procurement of mobile and portable equipment)

For projects that have the potential to impact sensitive resources, FEMA must consult with other Federal, State, and tribal agencies such as the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, State Historic Preservation Offices, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as other agencies and organizations responsible for the protection and/or management of natural and cultural resources, including Federally-recognized Indian tribes, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. For projects with the potential to have adverse effects on the environment and/or historic properties, FEMA's EHP review process and consultation may result in a substantive agreement between the involved parties outlining how the grantee will avoid the effects, minimize the effects, or, if necessary, compensate for the effects. Grantees who are proposing communication tower projects are encouraged to complete their Federal Communications Commission (FCC) EHP process prior to preparing their EHP review materials for FEMA, and to include their FCC EHP materials with their submission to FEMA. Completing the FCC process first and submitting all relevant EHP documentation to FEMA will help expedite FEMA's review.

Because of the potential for adverse effects to EHP resources or public controversy, some projects may require an additional assessment or report, such as an Environmental Assessment, Biological Assessment, archaeological survey, cultural resources report, wetlands delineation, or other document, as well as a public comment period. Grantees are responsible for the preparation of such documents, as well as for the implementation of any treatment or mitigation measures identified during the EHP review that are necessary to address potential adverse impacts. Grantees may use grant funds toward the costs of preparing such documents. The use of grant funds for mitigation or treatment measures that are not typically allowable expenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Failure of the grantee to meet Federal, State, local and territorial EHP requirements, obtain required permits, and comply with any conditions that may be placed on the project as the result of FEMA's EHP review may jeopardize Federal funding.

Recipients shall not undertake any project without the prior approval of FEMA, and must comply with all conditions placed on the project as the result of the EHP review. Any change to the approved project description will require re-evaluation for compliance with these EHP requirements. If ground disturbing activities occur during project implementation, the recipient must ensure monitoring of ground disturbance, and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, the recipient will immediately cease construction in that area and notify their FEMA Program Office, and the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office. Any projects that have been initiated prior to approval will result in a non-compliance finding and will not be eligible for funding.

For more information on FEMA's EHP requirements, Grantees should refer to FEMA's Information Bulletin #329, *Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Requirements for Grants*, available at <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/bulletins/info329.pdf>. Additional

information and resources can also be found at
<http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/ehp-applicant-help.shtm>.

E. Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements must be met throughout the life of the grant (refer to the program guidance and the special conditions found in the award package for a full explanation of these requirements). Any reports or documents prepared as a result of this grant shall be in compliance with Federal “plain English” policies, directives, etc.

1. **Federal Financial Report (FFR) – required semi-annually.** Recipients of any AFG grants awarded on or after October 1, 2009, are required to submit a semi-annual Federal Financial Report (FFR, SF-425)). The FFR, to be submitted using the online e-grant system, will be due semi-annually based on the calendar year beginning with the period after the award is made. Grant recipients will be required to submit a FFR throughout the entire period of performance of the grant. Reporting periods and due dates:

- January 1 – June 30; *Due July 31*
- July 1 – December 31; *Due January 31*

2. **Financial and Compliance Audit Report.** Recipients that expend \$500,000 or more of Federal funds during their fiscal year are required to submit an organization-wide financial and compliance audit report. The audit must be performed in accordance with GAO’s *Government Auditing Standards*, located at <http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm>, and OMB Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, located at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars/a133/a133.html>. Audit reports are currently due to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse no later than nine months after the end of the recipient’s fiscal year. In addition, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Comptroller General of the United States shall have access to any books, documents, and records of recipients of FY 2010 assistance for audit and examination purposes, provided that, in the opinion of the Secretary or the Comptroller, these documents are related to the receipt or use of such assistance. The grantee will also give the sponsoring agency or the Comptroller, through any authorized representative, access to, and the right to examine all records, books, papers or documents related to the grant.

The State shall require that sub-grantees comply with the audit requirements set forth in *OMB Circular A-133*. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that sub-recipient audit reports are received and for resolving any audit findings.

3. **Monitoring.** Grant recipients will be monitored periodically by FEMA staff, both programmatically and financially, to ensure that the project goals, objectives, performance requirements, timelines, milestone completion, budgets, and other related program criteria are being met.

Monitoring will be accomplished through a combination of desk-based reviews and on-site monitoring visits. Monitoring will involve the review and analysis of the financial, programmatic, performance and administrative issues relative to each program and will identify areas where technical assistance and other support may be needed.

The recipient is responsible for monitoring award activities, to include sub-awards, to provide reasonable assurance that the Federal award is administered in compliance with requirements. Responsibilities include the accounting of receipts and expenditures, cash management, maintaining of adequate financial records, and refunding expenditures disallowed by audits.

- 4. Grant Close-Out Process.** Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, grantees must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments throughout the period of performance. After these reports have been reviewed and approved by FEMA, a close-out notice will be completed to close out the grant. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be deobligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final FFR. The grantee is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawndown but remain as unliquidated on grantee financial records.

Required submissions: (1) final SF-425, due 90 days from end of grant period; and (2) final progress report, due 90 days from the end of the grant period.

PART VII.

FEMA CONTACTS

Grant Programs Directorate (GPD). FEMA GPD's Grants Management Division will provide fiscal support, including pre- and post-award administration and technical assistance, to the grant programs included in this solicitation. Additional guidance and information can be obtained by contacting the FEMA Call Center at (866) 927-5646 or via e-mail to ASK-GMD@dhs.gov.

SAFER Help Desk. The SAFER program staffs a help desk throughout the application period. The help desk can provide assistance with navigation through the automated application as well as provide programmatic assistance with respect to questions of eligibility. The help desk can be contacted at 1-866-274-0960 or via email at firegrants@dhs.gov. The help desk hours of operation during the application period are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. All times listed are eastern daylight times.

FEMA Regional Fire Program Specialists. Each of the FEMA Regions has specialists that can assist applicants with the application process. Interested parties may contact the SAFER helpdesk for information on the nearest regional specialists.

PART VIII.

OTHER INFORMATION

A. Excess Funds

Occasionally, due to successful competitive bid processes, over estimation of costs, etc., some grantees have funds remaining after the completion of their obligations outlined above. The following applies to SAFER grantees that have excess funds:

Hiring of Firefighters Activity Grantees

Grantees that complete the approved scope of work and still have grant funds available must return all excess funds to FEMA.

Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters Activity Grantees

Grantees that have completed the approved scope of work in this activity and still have grant funds available may use the excess funds to continue with recruitment or retention activities provided they are consistent with the original scope of work and conducted within the originally approved period of performance. This shall be done through the amendment request process.

B. Turndown Procedure

The SAFER grants are competitive. Some of the applications will not be successful but all applicants will receive a decision. For those applicants that are not successful, FEMA will prepare a letter, briefly describing the shortcomings and weaknesses of the application, as articulated by the Technical Evaluation Process (TEP). Due to the number of turndowns that have historically been experienced for these grants, detailed debriefs for all applicants will not be possible.

APPENDIX 1.

SAFER GRANTS DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the SAFER grants, the following definitions shall apply:

- 1. Automatic-aid:** An agreement whereby fire departments are dispatched simultaneously on the initial alarm or where fire departments participate in “closest-unit” response dispatching.
- 2. Benefits:** Includes regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, such as vacation leave, sick leave, military leave, etc., provided such costs are absorbed by all organization activities in proportion to the relative amount of time or effort actually devoted to each; and employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen’s compensation, pension plan costs, and the like, provided such benefits, whether treated as indirect costs or as direct costs, shall be distributed to particular awards and other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits accruing to the individuals or group of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable to such awards and other activities. Overtime expenses, other than those meeting FLSA requirements, are **not** eligible as benefits costs.
- 3. Career Fire Department:** An agency or organization in which all members receive financial compensation for their services (organizations that provide reimbursement on a paid-on-call basis are considered to be a “combination fire department” for the purposes of this program).
- 4. Combination Fire Department:** An agency or organization in which at least one active firefighter receives financial compensation for their services (including paid-on-call) and/or at least one active firefighter does not receive financial compensation for their services, other than life, health, and workers’ compensation insurance.
- 5. Emergency Medical Services Organization:** A public or private organization that provides direct emergency medical services, including medical transport.
- 6. Fire Department:** An agency or organization that has a formally recognized arrangement with a State, territory, local, or tribal authority (city, county, parish, fire district, township, town, or other governing body) to provide fire suppression on a first-due basis to a fixed geographical area. Fire departments may be comprised of members who are volunteer, career, or a combination of volunteer and career.

- 7. Firefighter:** An individual having the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression; being employed by a fire department of a municipality, county, or fire district; being engaged in the prevention, control, and extinguishing of fires; and/or responding to emergency situations in which life, property, or the environment is at risk. This individual must be trained in fire suppression, but may also be trained in emergency medical care, hazardous materials awareness, rescue techniques, and any other related duties provided by the fire department.
- 8. Formal Layoff Notice:** Any layoff notice should comport to the local rules and regulations that govern civil service employment in the jurisdiction that is considering the layoff action. In order to be reasonable to employees and to provide employees facing layoff actions a clear understanding of the impending action, any notice of layoff should be in writing and delivered to a specific employee affected by the action. The notice should identify a specific date employment will cease or specific event that would trigger the termination of employment. The notice should be delivered or otherwise presented directly to the effected employee in advance of the layoff action in accordance with the civil service provisions or union agreement in force in the jurisdiction taking action, e.g., 60 days prior to the effective date of the layoff action. The notice should specify whether the action is permanent or temporary as well as provide the anticipated schedule of layoffs. For the purposes of the SAFER program, a notice that is not executed within the specified terms of the notice will be considered void unless an additional notice is provided within 14 days of the original action date.
- 9. Initial Full Alarm Assignment:** Those personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structural fire.
- 10. Mostly Career:** A department is considered mostly career if 50 percent or more of their active firefighting membership is salaried staff.
- 11. Mostly Volunteer:** A department is considered mostly volunteer if more than 50 percent of their active firefighting membership is NOT compensated for their service other than a nominal stipend and/or insurance.
- 12. Mutual-aid:** An agreement whereby assisting fire departments are dispatched into another fire department's jurisdiction only when the first-arriving unit on a scene calls for assistance, or when specially requested by dispatch.
- 13. Operational Budget:** The budget supporting fire-related programs and/or emergency response activities (salaries, maintenance, equipment, apparatus, etc.).
- 14. Paid-on-Call:** Firefighters who receive a payment or stipend only when involved in an incident or mandatory operational activity. A department

whose membership is comprised of Paid-on-Call firefighters is considered a “combination fire department – mostly volunteer” for the purposes of this SAFER program.

- 15. Part-time Firefighter:** A firefighter who works less than 40 hours per week is considered a part-time firefighter. When more than one part-time firefighter shares a position that results in work in excess of 40 hours per week, we consider that shared assignment to be a full-time equivalent (FTE) position that must be accounted for in the staffing information provided in the application.
- 16. State:** For the purpose of these grants, “State” is defined as any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- 17. Statewide or Local Volunteer Firefighter Interest Organizations:** Statewide and local volunteer firefighter interest groups are organizations that support or represent the interests of firefighters in front of legislative bodies at the local, State, and Federal level. Such organizations include State or local firefighter and/or fire chiefs’ associations, volunteer firefighter relief organizations, and associations. DHS shall make the final determination as to whether an applicant is an appropriate firefighter interest group.
- 18. Staffing and Deployment:** The minimum staffing requirements to ensure a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively as defined in NFPA 1710 and 1720, as well as OSHA Respiratory Protection standard 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)(i) and 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)(ii).
- 19. Volunteer Fire Department:** An agency or organization in which no member receives financial compensation (in the form of salary or wages) for their services other than life and health insurance, workers’ compensation insurance and/or stipend per call. We consider a department to be “mostly volunteer” if more than 50 percent of its membership is made up of personnel who do not receive financial compensation for their services.